

The highest-ranking war criminal still unaccounted for is Martin Bormann, once Hitler's powerful secretary. Bormann is believed to be alive. He may be anywhere. West German authorities have offered a \$25,000 reward for information leading to his capture



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DATE 2001 2006

## World's Most Wanted Criminal

By BLAKE CLARK

**M**ARTIN BORMANN is one of the most ruthless destroyers of human life history has ever recorded. Once considered dead, he is now believed to be living outside his native Germany under an assumed name. West Germany is eager to bring him to justice. The public prosecutor of the state of Hesse has offered \$25,000 for information leading to his arrest. If Bormann is not behind the Iron Curtain, the chances are excellent that someone reading this magazine, which circulates in 14 languages in more than 100 countries, knows him.

Who is Martin Bormann?

A short, thick-set, round-shouldered man, he was born June 17, 1900, son of a career soldier in the German army. He attended agricultural school in Mecklenburg, then managed an estate north of Berlin.

At 20 he joined the Society Against Presumptuousness of the Jewry, and at 23 was a party to the murder of a man whom members of this society beat, throat-slashed and shot to death. He became an ardent Nazi at 27 and two years later married a woman as dedicated to the party as himself. Both despised Christianity.

Rising in the party, Bormann

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headed the staff of Rudolf Hess, Hitler's deputy. After Hess flew to Scotland in 1941, Bormann became chief of the party chancellery and two years later attained the powerful position of secretary to the Führer.

Bormann made himself indispensable to the Reich's leader. He kept two stenographers at Hitler's table, taking down everything the dictator said during the meals, so he could know and fulfill Hitler's every whim. Bormann never let anyone see Hitler alone, but was always present to learn everything going on. As the Führer's chief adviser, he helped draft the laws changing German justice.

The merest summary of his crimes is appalling. According to the official statement by the public prosecutor of Hesse, Bormann from 1939 until 1945 was a responsible collaborator in the mass killings of inmates of mental institutions and concentration camps. In this weeding out of the "unfit," Bormann "killed with premeditation" at least 100,000 persons. From 1941 to 1945, he "authoritatively collaborated" in the extermination of Jews and such other groups as Poles, Czechs and Russian prisoners of war, all of whom the Nazis considered racially inferior. In this way Bormann, "with premeditation, for malicious, cruel and abject motives, killed at least five million people."

Monstrous as these charges are, they are not the sole reason the West Germans have offered a \$25,000 re-

ward for Bormann. His case is special because he played a prominent role in helping Hitler develop his "scorched earth" policy, directed against the German people themselves.

The Reich's Minister of Armament Albert Speer described the plan at the Nuremberg trials. To be destroyed were all industrial plants, all important electrical facilities, waterworks, gasworks, food and clothing supplies; all bridges, all railway and communications installations; all waterways, ships, freight cars and locomotives. When Speer objected that this destruction would bring starvation and death to millions of Germans, Hitler repeated the Nazi belief in the survival of the fittest. The German people, he said, did not deserve to live. "When the war is lost," he declared, "the German people will be lost as well. This fate is irrevocable."

On March 23, 1945, Bormann ordered all food reserves destroyed and the entire German population moved by force to central Germany. Millions of women, children and old people were to be sent on this trek by foot, with no provisions of any kind. Because advancing Allied troops gave no time for such a large-scale operation, Bormann's order was never carried out.

By revealing this murderous plan, the West German Ministry of Justice hopes to destroy any remaining illusions about Nazi leaders and their creed. By trying Bormann, the min-

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by the Central Intelligence Agency  
Date: 2001

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istry wants to show that Nazism was at core a hatred for *all* humanity, part of a period of history that must be brought to a final and total conclusion.

Some people believe Bormann is dead. At Nuremberg in 1946, Hitler's driver, Erich Kempka, said that Bormann, with Dr. Werner Naumann, state secretary in the Reich's propaganda ministry, was killed on the night of May 2, 1945, when a German tank exploded near them. Hitler's pilot, Hans Baur, said he called back to the group from about 100 yards away after the explosion and Bormann did not answer. The International Military Tribunal, however, was not completely convinced. Trying Bormann *in absentia* for "crimes against humanity," it found him guilty. Sentence: death.

In the next few years, rumors flew that Bormann was alive. One man reported seeing him in July 1945, dressed in hunting clothes, on a train from Lüneburg to Flensburg in Germany. In 1946, he was said to be in the U.S. zone of Germany; in 1947, in Sydney, Australia; in 1948, in Russia, training to return one day as a commissar. Meanwhile, his wife had died in Italy in 1946.

Then, in 1950, Kempka's testimony was partly shattered by the reappearance of Naumann, supposed to have died with Bormann. Naumann and Artur Axmann, Hitler Youth leader who was also present on the night of May 2, 1945, testified that Bormann, too, had survived the

tank explosion unhurt, and the day after, when the three men went their separate ways, Bormann had been in good condition.

The prosecutor-general of Hesse, Fritz Bauer, a prewar anti-Nazi, stepped up the search. After three years, during which hundreds of witnesses were interviewed and all eyewitness accounts sent in over the past 20 years examined, the prosecutors reconstructed Bormann's fate.

As several other well-known Nazis did, Bormann may have worked on a farm in Russian-occupied Germany, waiting for a chance to cross over to the Western Zone. From there he escaped to Austria, then used a smugglers' route across the Dinaric Alps to Yugoslavia. He may have disguised himself as a priest and obtained the help of the Vatican and the Red Cross to get out of Yugoslavia into Italy. The fugitive could then have shipped out from an Italian port for any one of a number of South American countries eager for European immigrants. Passports were easy to come by; not even the money for passage was required.

Where is he now?

Strong leads come from Paraguay, Brazil, Argentina and Bolivia. According to Simon Wiesenthal, former head of the Jewish Documentation Center in Vienna, which helped track down Adolf Eichmann, Bormann is in Paraguay. Wiesenthal says that Bormann, guarded by four men equipped with walkie-talkies, has four different hideouts,

one in the southeast of the country, at the Paraná River, where he can cross quickly into either Argentina or Brazil. But Paraguay has in the past refused any help in trying to locate Nazi fugitives—they would, for example, never permit Bauer to compare Bormann's fingerprints with those on Paraguay's immigration permits.

Interpol, the international clearinghouse for police information, regards the Bormann case as political and therefore outside its concern. Theoretically, it is up to the International Military Tribunal, which tried Bormann at Nuremberg, to find the man it sentenced. The tribunal has now shrunk in scope until only two functions give it meaning: One is to run the Spandau prison in Berlin, where three Nazi war criminals serve out their time. The other is to carry out the sentence given Bormann, the only major war criminal still wanted.

Meanwhile, possibly some average citizen can act. Someone reading this may know Bormann by another name. Give serious thought to the possibility that you may have seen him. No one knows for sure, he may be anywhere—on an Iowa farm, in a small town in Germany or other European country, even in Israel, where he would be least expected to hide. He could be in Canada or

Mexico. If you ride the subway or bus, work in a motel, hotel or rooming house, are a doctor or nurse, drive a taxi, run a filling station or simply have a knack for remembering faces, be alert for Martin Bormann.

He is stocky and strong, not more than five feet eight inches tall, with a short thick neck and a large Slavic head. His eyes are brown. His dark-brown hair was receding from his broad forehead 20 years ago; he may be practically bald now. His face is sensual, with a wide, bulbous nose, large mouth and full lips. A large mole on his left temple is an identifying mark; he may have had it removed. He has short, square hands and wears size 8½ shoes. He has an alert, confident look, as if sizing up the person with him.

Reputedly, Bormann has a terrible temper, but can keep it under control. He is cold-blooded and aggressive. An indefatigable woman-chaser, he is said never to have met a female whom he didn't press for an affair. Though he was overweight, Bormann looked after his health, drinking neither alcohol nor coffee, just weak tea, and eating sparingly of meat.

If you know or have seen a man whom you believe to be Martin Bormann, call the nearest West German embassy.



*N*EW DIRECTIVE rumored from Washington: "If it moves, control it. If you can't control it, tax it. If you can't tax it, give it a billion dollars."

—L'Esion